



11 Ways Marin Grassroots Got It Done in 2011

Since 1995, **Marin Grassroots** has been working to advance equity and strengthen the voices of underrepresented communities through public policy initiatives in Marin County. We made great strides in 2011 toward our goals. **Here are 11 areas in which we advanced social equity in Marin in 2011:**

1. **Fair Housing and Action Coalition for Equity**

We made significant progress toward achieving fairer housing in Marin in 2011. We convened and coordinated activities of the Action Coalition for Equity, a diverse group that succeeded in persuading Marin County to agree to several equity-related stipulations in the County's plan to address impediments to fair housing in Marin, which was submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The plan will be implemented in the upcoming years.

2. **Equity Impact Initiative**

In 2011 we introduced the Equity Impact Review Process and Reports (EqIR) to Marin County. Similar to an Environmental Impact Review (EIR), required for any project in California that might impact the environment, an EqIR would be required of capital projects with a possible negative effect on equity or that might displace low-wealth families. Evidence-based research will uncover disparities and inequities within Marin County and the periodic Equity Impact Report will measure the progress of equity in important issues such as housing, health, employment, and transportation throughout the County.

3. **Transportation Equity Alliance of Marin (TEAM)**

In August 2011, Marin Grassroots and our allies succeeded in getting a new shuttle bus service added to benefit underserved residents of Southern Marin at a time when bus services are being cut. We facilitated the participation of 87 members of underrepresented communities (San Rafael's Canal Neighborhood, Marin City, and South Novato) with transportation planning agencies such as Marin Transit, the Transportation Authority of Marin, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

4. **Marin City**

The Marin City Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition, a consortium of associations organized by Marin Grassroots, finalized a platform for community change focused on equity. One of the first activities on the agenda is increasing local control of land-use planning. The Coalition also held the 13th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration on the Martin Luther King Holiday, and planned for the 14th Annual Celebration.

5. **Equal Voice Leadership Academy (EVLA)**

Designed to enhance the skills of emerging community leaders, the EVLA graduated a class of 12 in 2011. Using the Popular Education Model, Academy alumni learned by sharing information about policy advocacy and community organizing. This year, special emphasis was placed on social networking. Graduates are active in organizations such as Canal Alliance, Comite de Vecinos del Canal, Community Action Marin, Encuentro Latino, Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center, Marin Asian Advocacy Project, Marin Family Action, Marin Food Bank, Marin Headstart, Parent Voices, and Transportation Equity Alliance of Marin.

6. Equity Advisory Committee (EAC)

We convened the Equity Advisory Committee, comprised of government, business, and nonprofit leaders. The committee is tasked with introducing and strengthening equitable practices in the private sector. The EAC's signature event is the Be the Dream Awards Celebration.

7. Be the Dream Awards Celebration

We planned and launched the Be the Dream Awards Celebration to honor leaders in government and businesses that have demonstrated a willingness to address equity through employment practices and services. We are currently planning for the second annual Awards Celebration.

8. Capacity-Building Opportunities

Marin Grassroots helped provide capacity-building opportunities for community residents and Marin County employees by facilitating attendance at a national conference on equity, PolicyLink's Equity Summit. The conference stimulated thought and inspired those attending to build on existing efforts for a more equitable Marin. We will persist in fostering these efforts as we continue to identify best practices for equitable policies, practices, and principles.

9. Lifting Up Marin Voices

We communicated our social equity agenda through new and traditional media outlets. In addition to our Facebook pages, we are creating a new website, set to launch in 2012. Our work was covered by many local and national newspapers and media outlets including *The Marin Independent Journal*, *The North Bay Bohemian*, *The Pacific Sun*, KQED, National Public Radio, ABC's *7Live*, and *The New York Times*.

10. Leadership

Marin Grassroots continued to partner with many regional, state, and national social justice groups in 2011 to ensure that Marin remains at the forefront of the social equity movement. We are an advisor to the National Equal Voice for America's Families Campaign, a multi-state movement of more than 300 organizations representing thousands of families across the U.S. We are an anchor member of California Calls, the state-wide collaborative of more than 75 social justice organizations that are engaged in electoral organizing for equity. And we are a member of the steering committee of the Bay Area Social Equity Caucus, which has taken the lead in the Bay Area on transportation equity and land-use policies.

11. Recognition

In 2011 we were recognized by the Federal and State government for our outstanding work on the Census 2010 Complete Count Campaign in Marin. We formed a collaboration of 65 nonprofits and service agencies in Marin in order to identify Marin residents who were the least likely to be counted, especially in West Marin, Marin City, and the Canal Neighborhood of San Rafael. As a result of these efforts, Marin County ranked among the top five counties nationwide in percentage of census forms returned.

Looking Ahead

In 2012 we will be conducting our annual Civic Engagement Campaign in connection with the 2012 elections, and we are preparing for our Boards and Commissions Training, designed to bring people of color and representatives of low-wealth communities to decision-making tables. The training will launch in 2013. In 2012 we will also inaugurate our Marin Women of Color Summit (date to be arranged) and the We Are Marin Festival, to be held on Saturday, August 4, 2012, at the Marin County Fair Grounds. In addition, we'll be planning our Second Annual Be the Dream Awards Celebration for January 2013. All in all we are expecting great things—with your help—as we move toward a fairer and more inclusive Marin.